

Castlemaine Naturalist

September 2021

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Monthly newsletter of the
Castlemaine Field Naturalists Club Inc.



Golden Whistler, August, Forest Ck. Chewton
photo by Noel Young

Rare plants list revised

In response to the 1/07/2021 release of the Victorian Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988 Threatened List update by Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning, (DELWP) the *Rare, threatened and endangered plants of the Castlemaine district* list has also been updated and will be available on CFNC website Info_Booklets page.

The list, which was originally compiled by Ern Perkins and other CFNC members, has been updated to align it with the information included in the DELWP Threatened List, particularly the conservation status of each species. The Victorian Rare or Threatened Species (VROTS) information in our earlier list has been removed, as this information is no longer being updated and has been superseded by the DELWP list.

Our list has also been checked against the Federal Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment's Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act Threatened Flora List, although this is less significant because the Federal and State lists attempt to avoid duplication.

Included in our list are plant species that are uncommon, or indeed thought to be extinct, in the Castlemaine district, as well as locally occurring plants that are considered to be rare and endangered in Victoria even though they may be reasonably common locally. Species names are based on Flora of Victoria and the Castlemaine Field Naturalists Club Castlemaine Flora list (<https://www.castlemaineflora.org.au/>). Our updated rare plants list incorporates a number of species name changes.

One hundred and sixty-six species are included in the list, forty-three of which are not in Castlemaine Flora; this is mainly the case where a plant has not been seen for some time and there are no photographs or specimen samples.

Examples of species in the *Rare, threatened and endangered plants of the Castlemaine district* list.

Acacia lanigera, Woolly Wattle. Conservation status: Vulnerable.



Swainsona behriana, Hairy Swainson-pea. Conservation status: Endangered.



Boronia anemonifolia subsp. *Aurifodina*, Sticky or Goldfields Boronia. Conservation status: Endangered.



Cathrine Harboe-Ree

Native Plants of the Fryers Ridge Area

Our guest speaker in August was Rod Orr, member of Bendigo FNC, formerly at Latrobe University in Environmental Studies, and long-time observer of the flora of the Fryers Ridge area south of Chewton. Rod presented a stunning sequence of photos, organised by months through the year, from January-February when Box Mistletoe *Amyema miquelii* is in flower, through Autumn when Spreading Wattle *Acacia genistifolia* brightens the bush, and on through the year to the abundance of spring flowers.

The area is of course well known and highly valued by members of the club, with field trips held most years since CNFC was established. So it was very interesting to hear the views of a Bendigo-area naturalist on the special values of the flora along the Fryers Ridge Road and adjacent forest. Key points made by Rod include how rare some of the species are, with only a few plants known in some cases; the way the seeds of some species take root in softer, disturbed soil along the edge of the road; and the way species that have not been seen for decade or more following drought or fire can re-emerge. Rod gave the example of *Euphrasia collina* that he had not seen for 15 years reappearing after the plants he knew had been destroyed by track improvements. Rod noted with concern the rare plants he had seen along the roadside that would be destroyed if this road was widened and modified for a fire break.



The further issue of planned burns to reduce the risk of serious bushfires in the area, with Taradale and Malmsbury settlements along the eastern border, has been a concern to Castlemaine Field Naturalists, FOBIF and others, for decades. The impacts of any but the coolest “controlled” burns on the undergrowth, especially medium height shrubs that are such a feature of the area, can be devastating. In some cases, regrowth over the following 5 years or so results in impassable thickets of wattle and eucalypt – fuel for future fires. Rod mentioned some such examples of fire impacts and subsequent recovery from his years of visiting the area.

The following images remind us of an engaging and stimulating talk, encouraging us to head down Fryers Ridge Road. Sadly, COVID restrictions caused the cancellation of the excursion Rod had planned for us the following day, but we hope to re-schedule this for another time.

Peter Turner



Acacia lanigera



Grevillea obtecta

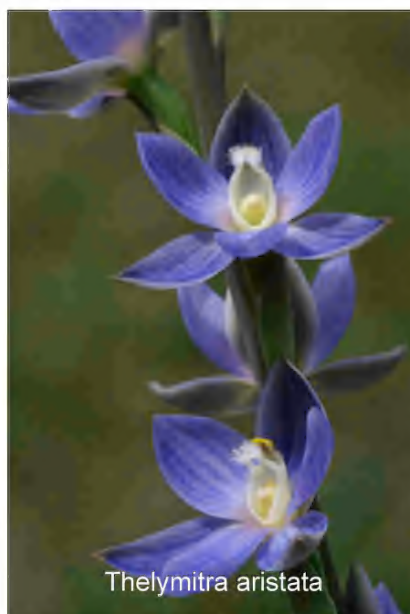
A few of the wildflowers to be found on the Fryers Ridge. Photos by Rod Orr



Gompholobium huegelii



Pterostylis plumosa



Thelymitra aristata



Grevillea alpina



Helichrysum scorpioides

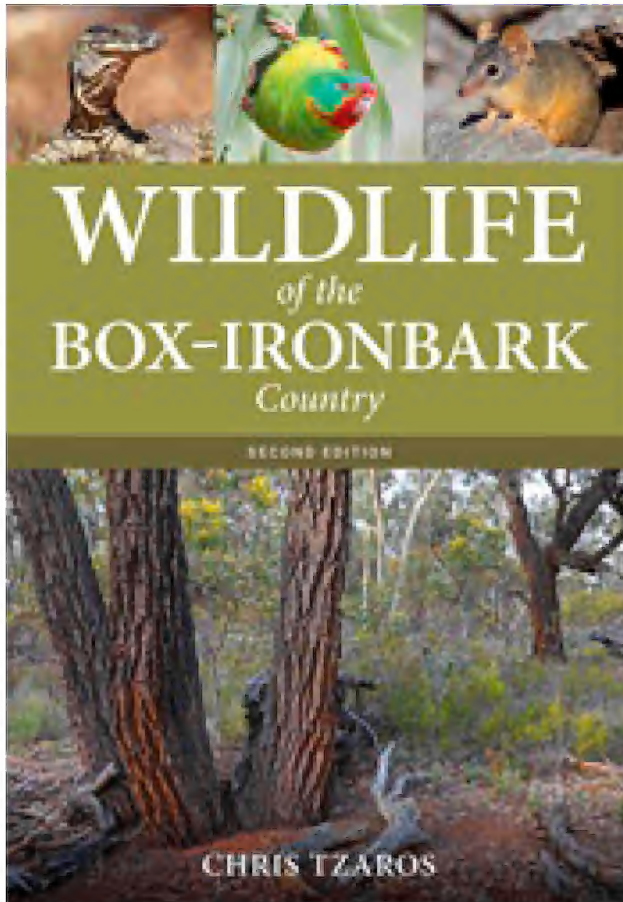


Indigofera australis

Second Edition of “Wildlife of the Box-Ironbark Country” by Chris Tzaros

Readers will be excited to learn that Chris Tzaros has produced a second edition of his invaluable book “*Wildlife of the Box-Ironbark Country*”, available from October 2021

(<https://www.publish.csiro.au/book/7945/>).



Chris says that the new edition is “a significant improvement in every way, with all the latest information, completely revised maps and an overhaul of the photos”.

Victoria's Box–Ironbark region is one of the most important areas of animal diversity and significance in southern Australia, providing critical habitat for many threatened and declining species.

Wildlife of the Box–Ironbark Country gives a comprehensive overview of the ecology of the Box–Ironbark habitats and their wildlife, and how climate change is having a major influence.

This extensively revised second edition features:

- ◆ detailed descriptions all of the mammals, birds, reptiles and frogs that occur in the region, a total of 267 species, each with a high-quality colour photograph and updated distribution map
- ◆ a ‘Where to watch’ section providing a list of parks and reserves, including maps and descriptions of 16 locations to observe Box–Ironbark wildlife.

This book is intended for land managers, conservation and wildlife workers, fauna consultants, landholders, teachers, students, naturalists and all those interested in learning about and appreciating the wildlife of this fascinating and endangered ecosystem.

Observations

Noel Young - A new family for the CBG Powerful Owls

First chick appeared early August - and then there were two! (about 10 days later)



Both parents are keeping a close eye on them. So are all their fans. It's a hoot!

Kerrie Jennings

Peaceful Doves



Southern Whiteface



Jenny Rolland & Euan Moore

Ileodictyon gracile (Basket Fungus)
Kalimna Park 21/07/21.



Peter Turner

Unusual hairy fungus growing on a wood pile. Possibly *Phycomyces nitans*. Note the yellow sporangia in the close-up.



Noel Young

Late August nesting activity on the island in Lake Joanna, CBG.

In a repeat of the previous years, Little Pied Cormorants have commenced with at least three nests, and a well hidden White-faced Heron is keeping the eggs warm.



Observations (Wild Life, September 1943)

George Broadway

Hoping to inspire our readers to find as many specimens as did the readers of "Wildlife" magazine in 1943.

In one of the few mentions of the war it was noted sadly that the size of the magazine had had to be reduced because of Government restrictions on the use of paper.

Another article which interested me was contributed by L.G. Chandler R.A.O.U. (Les). In my early and ignorant days as a naturalist I was teaching at Mildura High School where one of the senior ladies on the staff, learning of my interest in Natural History, invited me to join the Sunraysia Field Naturalists Club. This meant driving her to Red Cliffs for meetings because the vast majority of the members were WWI soldier settlers, who were settled on fruit blocks in the irrigation settlement. As a result I had the pleasure of attending many outings with the club, one of whose leading members was the said L.G. Chandler. In my ignorance of youth I was unaware of the high esteem in which L.G. was held in the world of bird watchers and photographers. I soon found out.

One of my memories which has nothing to do with birds was L.G. showing me a book he had in which was an inscription by the author, one C. J. Dennis who L.G. had known in the trenches of WWI. The inscription concluded with words like "I grant full permission to the owner of this book, L.G. Chandler to recite any portion in any place he b.....y well likes." (or words to that effect)

In this article in Wildlife September 1943 Les describes the wrens of the Mallee, with which of course he was very familiar.

Unfortunately the photos are all in black and white, but the interesting thing is that none of the names seem to match with the current names as used by Simpson & Day: neither the common name nor the scientific name. Les used the following names:-

Purple-backed Wren – *Malurus assimilis*; Blue & White Wren – *M. cyanotus*; Black-backed Wren - *M. melanotus*.

I find that the Purple-backed is now a race of the Variegated Fairy Wren - *Malurus lamberti*. The Black-backed is now a race of the Splendid Fairy Wren – *M. splendens*. I don't know about the Blue & White unless it's the female of the White winged.

In conclusion Les described a photo he took of a female wren feeding three young in a nest during a grasshopper plague. She had a grasshopper in her beak and the disgusted looks on the three young said quite plainly "Not grasshopper again".

Now to the observations and specimens from readers. As we have observed previously many specimens keep coming.

INSECTS

Devonport: Green Praying Mantis -*Orthodera ministralis*. Mostly a good guy although it does sometimes catch the occasional bee.

Richmond: Long-tailed Wasp - *Megalyra fasciipennis*. Very long hairlike tail used to penetrate rotting wood in order to lay eggs inside wood-boring grubs.

Eltham: Cocoon of Colles' Gum Moth, or close relative with a 'Woolly Bear' type caterpillar. When the cocoon is spun the spines are pushed through to the exterior where they give some protection. The spines are extremely irritating if they come in contact with the skin.

Geelong: Cocoon of the Drinker moth - *Pinara*, often mentioned.

Heidelberg: Wireworm larva of the Click Beetle. The shiny yellow larva feeds on underground parts of plants so is not welcome in the garden.

Brighton and Coburg: Rice weevils, described previously. Are not carriers of disease so if the rice is washed it is OK to use. If the rice is spread on a tray in the fairly hot oven for half an hour it will kill the weevils without harming the rice.

Manangatang: Vine Hawk Moth, a pest in vine growing districts. Often sent in.

Cowes; Convolvulus Hawk Moth: the well camouflaged larva feeds on native and introduced species of Bindweed.

Panton Hill: Caterpillar of the Emperor Gum Moth. Said to be fairly common but I haven't seen one for years. As a teacher I would be brought specimens by my students. I once kept a cocoon for about 3 years waiting for it to "hatch".

Northcote: Little brown insect with bullet-like front end is a Mole Cricket, the one which produces the sound below ground on summer evenings.

Abbotsford: Earwig. Despite many old superstitions it is harmless, but does do damage in the garden.

Regent: A moth much larger than the Codlin Moth, one of the *Anthelas*.

Armadale: Heubners Case Moth, immature. Sandy Case Moth which uses sand to cover its case instead of sticks. Leaf Hoppers or Frog Hoppers which suck the sap from plants. They resemble moths but the mouth parts are different and they do not have scales on their wings.

SPIDERS

Burwood: Tailed Spider, quaint and harmless. Makes a series of brown fluffy spindle-shaped egg-cocoons which are suspended in the web in the form of a necklace.

Camberwell; Fitzroy; Cheltenham; Orchard Spider. Sent in frequently.

North Shore: Leaf-mimicking Garden Spider. The vivid marks on the back are imitations of the outlines of serrated leaves such as rose leaves and their shadows, so the spider is very difficult to see.

GENERAL

Stawell: A tube of sand infiltrated with lime. Not a **fulgarite** which is believed to be caused by lightning striking and fusing the sand rather like glass so the sand grains can no longer be separated.

Birds of Sutton Grange August 2021

Nigel Harland

Superb Fairywren	Red-browed Finch	White-browed Scrubwren
Australian Magpie	Australian Raven	Laughing Kookaburra
Yellow-tufted Honeyeater	Sulphur-crested Cockatoo	Long-billed Corella
Crimson Rosella	New Holland Honeyeater	Welcome Swallow
Common Bronzewing	Red Wattlebird	Galah
Striated Pardalote	Spotted Pardalote	Grey Shrike-thrush
Eurasian Blackbird	Australian Boobook	Pied Currawong
White-faced Heron	White-naped Honeyeater	Shining-bronze Cuckoo
Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike		

Spotted Pardalotes are often around, but not to the same extent as their striated cousins.

First White-faced Heron for some time.

The Boobook seems to have taken up temporary residence.

WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS

The following have recently joined the CFNC:

Leila Brook, John Lewis.

We wish them both a happy and stimulating association with the club.

Wednesday Wildflower Wanders – dates for your diary

SUBJECT TO COVID RESTRICTIONS

Continuing the annual Spring tradition, the Castlemaine Field Naturalists Club will be running a series of afternoon wildflower walks for 4 weeks during September. These are a great opportunity for a leisurely stroll through some different areas of local bushland – to both see and learn about daisies, lilies and many other seasonal wildflowers indigenous to the greater Castlemaine area. Everyone is welcome to attend, and each walk will be led by a club member.

The Details:

Dates: Successive Wednesdays in September; 8th, 15th, 22nd, and 29th.

Departure from: the carpark at the U3A building (the 'Octopus'), Duke st., opposite the Castle Motel, Castlemaine.

Departure time: Departing at 4 pm. sharp.

Return time: The aim is to return by 5.30 pm.

What to bring: Good walking shoes, water, hat, sunscreen.

Travel: Most sites will have a short drive to get there.

RSVP: No need. Just turn up ready to go by 4 pm. No cost for attendance. Children must be accompanied by an adult.

Walks will be cancelled in extreme weather conditions.

Please comply with Government COVID-safe requirements on the day.

Walk 1: Wednesday 8th Sept: Kalimna Park. Leaders: Rosemary and Peter Turner

Details for further walks by email and website blog.

Guest Speaker Friday September 10, 7.30 pm

Meeting by Zoom (see details for joining on the back page)

Cathrine Harboe-Ree

In October - November 2018 Cathrine and Brian Cutler travelled with Canadian company GAdventures to the Falklands, South Georgia, the South Orkneys, the Antarctic Peninsula and several islands in its vicinity. Their trip was bookended by short visits to the Chilean coast and Tierra del Fuego. On the Antarctic cruise they were 2 of 134 passengers led by an expert team comprising sea mammal and bird experts, geologists, climatologists, historians, a photographer and an artist. The presentation will provide a flavour of these fascinating and environmentally endangered places, with a focus on bird and mammal life.



Adelie Penguins, South Georgia, Photo by Cathrine Harboe-Ree

Excursion Saturday, September 11, 1.30 pm.

Chewton Bushlands. Leader: Antoinette Birkenbeil [SUBJECT TO COVID RESTRICTIONS]

The walk will take place in three stages, starting at the Coliban Reserve in Kennedys Lane about 200m off Harmony Way. We will first explore the granite sand area of the reserve, noted for its birdlife and spring flowering of Chocolate lilies, ground covers and orchids. Then we will travel on foot or by car further along Kennedys Lane to the top of the ridge to explore an area of regrowth forest and the denuded soils of the goldfields featuring a road through a steep gully of contrasting south and north facing slopes with many less frequently seen plants. Finally we will travel to view a recent project of the Chewton Bushlands Association funded by a Community Grant from Mount Alexander Shire Council to rehabilitate a dam to increase biodiversity and environmental resilience followed by our normal coffee/tea break.

Bring: Wet weather gear, boots, cameras and afternoon tea.

Meet: 1.30pm at the Octopus, Duke St, opposite the Castle Motel, Castlemaine.

Please comply with Government COVID-safe requirements on the day.

The Field Trip will be cancelled in extreme weather conditions.

Disclaimer: The opinions expressed in this newsletter are those of the contributors and not necessarily those of the club

Castlemaine Field Naturalists Club

COMING EVENTS

Monthly meetings will continue to be held on-line via ZOOM until further notice, commencing at 7.30pm. If you have registered for our previous webinar meetings you will be sent the link for registering with Zoom. If you have not joined before and wish to attend, please email Peter Turner at munrods1@iinet.net.au

Our guest speaker will follow the usual 'observations' session when members can share recent interesting sightings with an option to show a photo or two. If you have photos to be shown please email JPEG file(s) to Euan Moore at calamanthus5@bigpond.com by Noon on the day of the meeting.

Excursions will be held this year (subject to COVID restrictions) on the Saturday after the monthly meeting. Meet at the Octopus (opposite the motel in Duke St) for departure at 1.30pm unless otherwise advised.

Wildflower Wanders: Wed Sept 8, 15, 22, 29, 4 – 5.30 pm. Meet at the Octopus.

Fri Sept 10 Meeting: Speaker - Cathrine Harboe-Ree – 'Nature in the far south: A journey to the Antarctic'

Sat Sept 11 Excursion: 'Chewton Bushlands' with Antoinette Birkenbeil

Fri Oct 8 Meeting: Speaker - Chris Timewell (Birdlife Australia) "State of Box-Ironbark Woodland birds". Joint meeting with Birdlife Castlemaine District

Sat Oct 9 ALL DAY Excursion: 'Nardoo Hills' with Julie Radford (*rescheduled*)
OR 'Birds and wildflowers in Terrick Terrick NP' with Euan Moore

Fri Nov 12 Meeting: Speaker - Phil Ingamells (VNPA) 'Fire and biodiversity'

Sat Nov 20 Excursion: 'Kalimna Park – prescribed burn impacts' with Karl Just

Fri Dec 10 Meeting: members night

Business meetings - third Thursday of each month.

Club website (Web master: Ron Wescott) - <http://castlemainefnc.wordpress.com/>

Castlemaine Naturalist - email newsletter material to: newsletter.cfnc@gmail.com

*Deadline for the October edition is 24th September.

Subscriptions for 2021

Ordinary membership: Single \$35, Family \$50

Pensioner or student: Single \$25, Family \$30

Subscription includes postage of the monthly newsletter, Castlemaine Naturalist

2021 Committee

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